

COMMON SCHOOL ASSISTANT.

A Monthly Paper, for the improvement of Common School Education.

VOL. II.

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Edited by J. Orville Taylor.

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From the well-known character and abilities of
the Editor of this Paper, and the vital importance
of the cause it advocates, we hope that every citizen
will consider it his duty to aid in giving the
"Common School Assistant" a circulation in every
family and school in the Union.

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STATISTICS.

Virginia.

Population,	1,211,272
No. of children and youth,	300,000
No. without the means of school education,	117,000
No. of schools,	2,833
Size of the school fund,	\$1,551,857 47
Annual revenue,	78,840 61
Annual expenditure of this revenue,	62,927 18
Annual increase of the capital fund,	15,413 43
Out of the annual expenditure of 62,927.18, there is given to the common schools only.....	*45,000 00

The remainder is given to the University of Virginia. The school system does not make an equitable or satisfactory distribution of the fund. The commissioners do not perform their duty with that fidelity and promptness which the prosperity of the cause demands; neither do the inhabitants generally feel that regard for education which their best interests dictate. The school law should divide the state distinctly into districts, or small portions, and place over each portion, with rigid directions, active, responsible school officers.

* See State Reports, and Reports of a "Recluse," the latter published in the state papers last December.

Indiana.
Population, 341,582
No. of fit subjects for school should be about 64,000

We have not been able to obtain any *satisfactory* accounts of the state of education in Indiana. There is a flourishing school for the education of common school teachers at Madison. There is also at Madison, a paper called the Common School Advocate, published monthly for the improvement of common schools.

Illinois.
Population, 290,974
No. between 4 and 16 years of age, not far from 62,000
Size of the school fund, \$1,924,109

This fund is now in the present state:
Actual fund at interest, \$108,843
Value of seminary lands unsold, 400,000
Value of sections, numbered 16, and given to create a school fund, 1,211,933
Estimate of the 3 per cent fund on public lands not sold in the State, 563,333

Total, \$1,924,109

Hitherto but a small part of the income of this princely fund has been expended.—If properly invested, the income will be amply sufficient to educate every child in the state. It is sincerely to be hoped, that there will be a liberal forethought, an enlightened sentiment, whenever the school system shall be carried out into every district in the state. In the first place, the state wants an active officer of public instruction, who will devote the whole of his energies to the subject, and to the people's education. We hope she will be careful how she invests her funds, so that Illinois may never look back, as some of the older states now do, upon the almost total loss of the school fund, *from bad management*.

At Jacksonville, a monthly paper—the Common School Advocate—is issued for the improvement of common education. This paper is conducted with considerable ability. We wish it great success.

Michigan.
Population not far from 120,000
No. between 4 and 16 years of age supposed to be 25,000

This state has adopted an excellent school system. The legislature has also wisely created the office of "Superintendent of Common Schools." It would be well if some of the older states could take a hint from this younger sister; for we shall see that this "head to the school system" is far from being a general thing with the states. Many of the states have never had a superintendent of common schools; yet we believe there is no one of them but what has appointed men to inspect meat and flour!!! The government, to some extent, takes much better care of our food than of our education.

Michigan has sold but a small part of the public lands, given to the state by congress to raise a school fund. Delaying the sales till the land increases in value, will enlarge the school fund. There is a noble, liberal spirit in behalf of education in Michigan.—It will honor and elevate the people.

Mississippi.
Population, 136,806
No. of children, 28,000

A creditable correspondent writes the following:

"The conclusion my own mind would draw from what I myself see, and from what I learn from others, is this—

" Of the whole number of children in the country,

" One-tenth are well educated—

" One-fifth tolerably well educated, being taught to read, write and cipher, pretty accurately:

" One-third, or a little more, having a provision irregular and precarious, are taught to read, write and cipher, at least in some measure.

" For the education of another third, there is no adequate provision.

" Hence it is no uncommon thing to find many children in this country who cannot read or write at all.

" With the above views of my own on this subject, I find, upon examination, that

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others, who are acquainted with the state of things in this country, fully concur."

There is no general school system in operation. Some of the counties have sold their school lands and opened a few schools. But a small portion of the children have the means of a common school education.

Connecticut.—Further Statistics.

Having received the report for 1837, of the commissioner of the state school fund, we are enabled to give some further particulars.

Total capital of the school fund,.....	\$2,027,402 49
Income of the school fund during the past year,.....	113,135 83
Amount of moneys paid to schools from the state fund for the year ending March 31st, 1837,.....	95,862 85
No. of children between 4 and 16 years of age,.....	83,359
The income appropriated gives to each child in the state, for the past year, precisely.....	\$1 15

The sum appropriated to the schools this past year, exceeds all former yearly appropriations, by above \$8,000.

It is a curious fact, that the present number of children in the state between 4 and 16 years of age is 422 less than the number in the last report.

[We shall be happy to receive any further statistical statements from the several states.]

SARATOGA COUNTY.

An adjourned meeting of the friends of education was held at Schuylerville, on the 29th of June last.

It was resolved that in order to render their efforts more efficient an association should be formed. A constitution was then adopted, and officers for the ensuing year appointed. A committee was selected to digest a system of instruction to be recommended to the several districts of the town. The meeting was adjourned to convene at the same place on the 4th of July.

On the 4th of July, met pursuant to adjournment, when the committee on the system of instruction reported a plan in progress, which was to embrace all the branches of education to be taught in our common schools, to be practical in its application.

On motion, the committee was increased from three to five in number. Amendments were proposed to the constitution, and an animated debate ensued, but the constitution remained unaltered.

E. H. MAY, Pres't.

W. BARNES, Secretary.

The editor of the "Washington Sentinel and Free Press" says, "We understand that a school will be opened the first of September, in Schuylerville, for training teachers, to supply the several school districts in the town, with those who will

carry out the method of instruction recommended by the committee, and that those teachers will receive a liberal compensation."

ORANGE COUNTY.

A friend has favored us with the proceedings of the education society of this county, at their annual meeting, held at Goshen on the 17th of June last. The president, Hon. C. Borland, addressed the meeting, in accordance with the constitution, after which it was resolved substantially as follows:—That the address be requested for publication in the papers of the county and in the "Common School Assistant;" that the society hold a special meeting at Goshen on the 2d of October next, at 1 o'clock, P. M. for the promotion of the objects of the society; that a committee be appointed to form a plan for organizing town education societies; and that the officers of the society be chosen at each annual meeting.

The following persons were chosen officers of the society for the year 1837:

Rev. M. N. McClanen, President.
Hon. J. R. Van Duser, 1st Vice-President.
Rev. B. B. Stockton, 2d Vice-President.
Jas. S. Horton, Cor. Sec.
J. C. Norton, Rec. Sec.

Elihu Moore, Treasurer.

And fourteen directors, one from each town in the county.

SUFFOLK COUNTY.

The education society of this county is making a worthy and persevering effort, through its corresponding secretary, Mr. O. O. Wickham, to introduce the "Common School Assistant" into every family.

"LIVE AND LET LIVE."

BY MISS SEDGWICK.

We never read one of Miss Sedgwick's productions without feeling assured—and strong and happy is the feeling too—that man has gained something—something that will strengthen and elevate his higher aspirations, and make him a nobler and a happier being. This feeling was never more lively than while reading the "Poor Rich Man and the Rich Poor Man," and the work just published, "LIVE AND LET LIVE." The eye moistens and the cheek glows over her pure, warm pages, of truth, and love, and domestic affection. The heart—the guileless young heart—in its love, its warm gushes of feeling, its tender, holy eloquence, poured out in childish simplicity—gives a fascinating charm and a chaste, benevolent impression to the whole picture. We know of no one who can look into the operations of the mind—especially the young mind—and see how it thinks and feels, and how it would express itself, so faithfully, so closely, as Miss Sedgwick. We never intend to make up a library for school districts without putting into it the two bright, rich gems, the titles of which we have given above. We would be willing to give six months

hard labor, (and we are certain that we could not work with a happier heart,) if it could contribute towards giving each of the above books to every family in the Union. Such as can possibly spare fifty cents from the *necessaries* of life, can not do better with the money than to buy "Live and Let Live," or the "Rich Poor Man." From the former work, just issued, we make a few extracts. The first shows a *mother's primary school*.

"Three of Mrs. Hyde's daughters sat by the window, one reading aloud a book of travels, one drawing, and another painting, and near them a seamstress plying her needle, and listening and enjoying with the rest. Two little girls of four and six were setting beside their mother, hemming ruffles. 'We must do them very neatly, Grace,' said the youngest, 'for mama says Mrs. Lux will look at them with her spectacles; and besides, mama says, it is a shame to do work badly for a poor woman.' Two boys were at a table with maps and slates, and there seemed to be in this hive but one unproductive labourer, a busy little urchin, who, among other miscellaneous mischief, let fall a glass, which luckily not breaking, the little Pharisee exclaimed, 'Was not that careful?' This excited a general laugh." * * *

What an admirable lesson here is for mothers! One of the daughters reading aloud while the others are all busy with the hands, and the seamstress, (see the genuine humanity and true democracy of the school,) is *listening and enjoying with the rest!* Could there be a more delicate, or a more efficient way of instructing her, whose lot in life made it necessary to labor, perhaps to the neglect of the mind! How much might be done in this way to inform the less privileged! How much "home mission" there might be, by a little more thought, a little less selfishness, and a good deal more *true christianity*. Two of the youngest girls are sewing for a poor old woman, and encouraging each other to do the work well, for it is a shame to do work badly for a *poor woman*, and besides, say they, she will look at our stitches through her spectacles. What a picture of simplicity, industry and benevolence! The two boys are sitting around a table with maps and slates and a little rogue—the youngest, and scarcely large enough to exercise his limbs carefully or steadily, yet happy in his muscular movements—is amusing himself and occasionally the whole scene with his comic drollery. Let every mother look at this scene and we are certain that it will be a hint, and a model for thousands of our readers.

The reflection in the next extract is timely and just. Would that mothers could understand this!

"It is as consummate a folly to permit an American girl to grow up ignorant of household affairs, as

it would be to omit mathematics in the education of an astronomer, or the use of the needle in the training of a milliner."

Says Dr. Johnson, "Its grasp, (female education,) its aim, is at accomplishments, rather than acquirements—at gilding rather than at gold. They are most properly termed *accomplishments*; because they are designed to accomplish a certain object—*matrimony*."

We hope this little satire, accompanied with Miss Sedgwick's sound reflection, will do some good, and hasten the time when girls shall be taught the *domestic* duties and the *mental* acquirements—not only to catch a husband, but to make him happy—to make the *cage* delightful as well as the *net* successful.

The next paragraph we give our readers from "Live and Let Live," shows the provision which Mrs. Hyde (a model of a housewife) made for the convenience and *mental* improvement of her domestics.

"Is not this a pretty room?" (said an old domestic to another, a new comer,) "this nice matting is so easy to keep clean, and blinds, and as good mattresses as any lady could wish, and every thing so tidy about the bed; and a looking-glass that dont make you look as if your face was all aged; and only see here," she added, withdrawing a little green curtain, "see this shelf of books; not the Bible only, but a whole row, to instruct and entertain you too—and what is more, she loves to have you get time to enjoy yourself reading; and the long and short of it is, that she and all her children seem to have a realizing sense that their help have minds and hearts as well as they."

We can educate in many other ways than by building school-houses and sending children to them. Children can teach the domestics and they can listen to the family reading—and libraries, small and appropriate, may be given to those who labor for us, and time given that they may read and reflect. The more intelligent should always seek means and occasions to instruct the more ignorant. To aid in this the last extract gives a happy hint. One of the girls who had had the reading of the domestic library and thus acquired a taste for information, was one day so circumstanced as to show herself, for the time, the superior of the family. The circumstance is as follows.

"During the meal, which was not hurried, as if the only reason for meeting around the table were to consume the food and enjoy that, Susan told her father some interesting particulars she had heard from a country lady of the best mode of rearing and taking care of silk worms, and how much finer and more plentiful the silk was if the worm was well fed, and kept clean and healthy. 'And dont you think, papa,' said little Grace, 'she got to love them—love a worm—was not that funny.'

"'No,' interposed Susan; 'for how often has papa told us we should love any thing we took *good* care of.'

"'You have guessed pretty right, Grace,' said

her father, smiling at her modest explanation of her mama's tenderness; 'but can you tell me Susan, who first found out a mode of unwinding the silk from the cocoon?' 'No sir.' 'Can you, Gifford?' 'No sir.' 'Can you, Ella?' 'No sir.' 'Nor you, mama?' 'No sir.' A smile went round with the negative, and as Mrs. Hyde pronounced hers, her eye met Lucy's, (the servant girl.) She saw the girl was listening with lively interest, that her lips moved as if on the point of speaking, but were restrained by modesty. 'Do you know, Lucy?' she asked. Instead of the monosyllable she expected, Lucy answered diffidently, 'I believe ma'am, it was an Empress of China called Lou-see.'

"'Why, who told *you*, Lucy?' asked Grace. Lucy said nothing till Mr. Hyde authorized a reply, by asking where she had learned the fact. She said her mother was trying to have her brother learn to take care of silk worms, and that, seeing the advertisement of a book about them, she had purchased and read it before she sent it.

"'There is an example for you, my children,' said Mr. Hyde; 'you see that, by keeping your eyes and ears open, you may get knowledge on every hand, and communicate it.'

Space does not permit us to make further extracts from "Live and Let Live." We believe enough has been said, however, to make every one desire the whole work. We sincerely wish its general circulation.

READING.

With most teachers the pupil reads his verse to pronounce the words—not to get the ideas the verse may contain, but to call correctly all the words, large and small, the verse may comprise. If the words are rightly pronounced, the pupil gives himself great credit, for it is all that has been required of him.

A few days since we visited a school which had an excellent teacher. After the class had read he put the following questions—the lesson that had been read was in the "Farmer's School Book," and on the "IMPROVEMENT OF THE SOIL." The class had "read round," when the teacher said, "you may close your books," and then continued,

Teacher. (The first scholar,) what is the subject of your lesson?

Scholar. The improvement of the soil.

T. What does that mean?

S. To make the soil more suited to the growth of plants.

T. Before you can prepare soil what must you know?

S. We must have found out the particular food the plant likes, and the nature of the soil we wish to prepare.

T. Very well, the next may answer; what is usually the first thing to be done?

S. The earth must be stirred with a plough or a spade, or with some instrument.

T. What good does ploughing land?

S. It divides and softens the earth—it throws to the top the mould and manures which the rains have washed in to some depth—it loosens the earth so that the seed may be covered and the roots spread out.

T. That is sufficient on that point.

S. I would like to mention one other good ploughing does.

T. Well, you may.

S. It destroys the weeds.

T. Yes that is important—is it, the next, a good practice to harrow the fall grain in the spring.

S. In many cases it is—it opens the earth and lets in the air and moisture.

T. What do you say of the drag you use on grain?

S. It should be light and the teeth made of wood.

T. When, the next, should the roller be used?

S. On rough open soils.

T. When is this machine used with great injury?

S. On wet heavy land—such land should be left open as possible.

T. What other good effects of the roller?

S. It presses the seed into contact with the earth—it smooths the land for the scythe—and when the frost in spring throws the roots out of the ground the roller will press them back into the earth and prevents the crop from spring killing.

T. How many soils are there?

S. The principal soils are *clayey-calcareous*, which means it has lime qualities in it—*siliceous*, which means stoney, gravelly, &c. and *sandy*.

T. Do these include all the soils.

S. Perhaps all that need mending.

In this way the teacher questioned the class for eight minutes, and I never saw more pleasure and interest given to a lesson. It would have been a pleasure to increase the questions, but the teacher had to stop. Said he to me, "I love to teach children something they can feel an interest in—the study of agriculture has given more interest to that class than you could think possible. I hope the time will soon come when children will be permitted to read what they understand, and what they can make a practical use of in after life." I thought to myself, if all teachers were like you, the right studies would soon be introduced, and the schools would be a pleasant place for the children to visit. The teacher should never suffer the pupil to read without asking questions that will cause the pupil to arrange

his ideas and express them in words and that will prove to the teacher that what has been read, has also been understood. C.

A GREAT MISTAKE.

We generally call those educated who can read, that is, take up a book and pronounce the words in it with some facility. We say there are so many in a certain state or county who are uneducated; we mean by this there are so many who can not read or write. Such language as this leads to wrong conclusions, for a man may be able to call all the words in a book and yet not get one idea from the exercise; indeed, this is likely to be the general result, considering the prevailing methods of teaching reading. And again, a man may be ignorant of books, not able to name a letter, and yet educated—*educated in men and things*. Thus we can not tell how many are educated, by knowing how many can *read*.

Our education has, hitherto, been so defective and deficient, that we have not much of an argument when we appeal to the educated as proofs of the advantages of knowledge. By calling those educated who can merely read, we have done injustice to the true influence of knowledge. It is frequently the case that we see men ignorant of books, but well educated in *men and things*, who are far superior to many in the ranks of scholars. In this way the world has come to set a small estimate on a school education.

If the schools were what they ought to be, and *what they may be made*, they would show to all, learned and unlearned, impressively, and in language that never could be misunderstood, that *knowledge is power*—not only power, but *happiness and liberty*. Our schools must be greatly raised before they will give an education that shall make every man its advocate and its best argument. This shows us that a good way to increase schools is to make those better which are already established, and that we must teach something more than mere reading and writing before we can expect the benefits of knowledge.

INCONSISTENCY.

In a late tour through western New-York we not unfrequently had a view something like the following. A rich energetic soil as far as the eye could reach; almost every field bearing on its bosom a heavy growth of golden wheat; the cattle in the high pastures, large, fat and beautiful; the private dwellings tastefully constructed, painted and commodious; the barns and out-

houses, numerous, in sheltered healthy places and of choice materials and architecture; and the only dark spot in this bright and bountiful view was a small tenement, with its clap-boards partly off, its windows filled with hats and *shingle lights*, standing close by the wheel-rut of the road, without a wood-house, the stone wall butting up against the sides, and not a tree or a green spot belonging to it. It was always easy to distinguish the dwelling—it was the school house of this rich country.

SYRACUSE ACADEMY.

We lately had the privilege of attending an examination in this new institution, and of learning something of its history and its capacities. The building is a little distance east of the village, situated on a gentle eminence and commanding a rich, extensive, and beautiful prospect. The material is brick, four stories high, and cost \$16,000. The academy has been so fortunate as to obtain as principal Mr. Kellogg, formerly of Long-Island—and over the female department, Miss Frisbie—a young lady remarkable for her attainments and her capacities to teach. The examination proved the institution to be admirably conducted. It went into operation for the first, last May, and now numbers 85 pupils. We heartily wish this institution success—it is on an enlightened, liberal plan. The village of Syracuse now offers every inducement to parents who have children to educate. It is no small privilege for such to live in a place possessing such high advantages of education. Harvey Baldwin, Esq. is president of the institution. This gentleman, our readers will remember, has done much for the cause of common education in Onondaga county.

HOW IMPROVEMENTS ARE MADE.

The following is an actual occurrence, with but a change of names, the originals of which can be given with the place where the same transpired. It only shows what can be done through the “personal exertion” of one man. Are there not others similarly situated, who are *able and willing* to do as much?

Mr. Thomas is a man of some property, who has lately removed from the city to his native village. He finds the schools for his neighbors’ children in an unhappy condition. The school-houses are small, and miserably arranged within and without.—(We do not say that there are not others *somewhat* like them.) These houses first claim his attention.

One day, when passing the school-house,

he meets a neighbor, Mr. Jones, and the following discourse ensues:

Mr. Thomas. “Good morning, neighbor Jones; I am happy to meet you. The school has not yet commenced—suppose you go in the house with me.”

Mr. Jones. “I—I—don’t know; I’m in something of a hurry, Mr. Thomas; I believe I must be getting along.”

Mr. Thomas. “Come along, neighbor, come along; we’ll not stay long. Here is something for you to look at.” [Enters.]

Jones. “Well, well, it’s a long while since I was in the school-house, though.” [Follows.]

Thomas. “Here my lad,” [speaking to a boy at play,] “come in the school-room. Now, where is your seat, my boy?”

Boy. “There, sir, on that bench.”

Thomas. “Sit down on it. Let neighbor see how it fits you.” [Boy gets up on the bench and sits down.] “There neighbor Jones, just examine that boy’s position. His feet do not reach the floor by six inches—his back is as crooked as a bow, for he has nothing to rest against—and to add to his comfort, the bench is but eight inches wide, with rough edges, full of knot holes, and the cuts and gashes of the jack-knife. There he sits, on that hard slab, from three to four hours in each half day, with perhaps an intermission of ten minutes during each sitting, and with scarcely no change of position. Now, neighbor Jones, how would you feel after spending the same time on your joiner’s bench?”

Jones. “Wh—wh—why, Mr. Thomas, I shouldn’t like to do it exactly—I’d rather not.”

Thomas. “Well, but how would you feel if you were *obliged* to do it?”

Jones. “Why, my back would nearly be broken, and I should ache, and be so tired, and so full of pain, that I shouldn’t get over it in another six hours, and it I did then, I might think myself well off.”

Thomas. “And do you imagine that a boy eight years old is more able to endure such irksome fatigue than yourself, now in the prime of life?”

Jones. “No, no, indeed I don’t. And now I think of it, this must be *one reason* why my children are so loth to go to school. It’s no wonder.”

Thomas. “Very true—and do you suppose a child can *learn* when in such a painful, uneasy situation?”

Jones. “He must have more patience than I have, or even Job himself, if he did.”

Thomas. “More patience than yourself! Can a boy have this? And all the scholars

that have slates and books are placed in the same agreeable situation! Now let me call in one of the A B C scholars"—[goes to the door.] "Here, my little fellow; come in here once; now show me where you sit when school is in." [Boy points to the place on a long plank, set on four pegs, very near the stove, which is stuffed with wood on fire.] "Sit down there a moment, my boy, while I talk with the other one."—[Turning to the first boy, he says,] "Do you write, sir?"

Boy. "Yes, sir."

Thomas. "Well, get your copy book, and let us see you write a line or two." [A B C scholar tumbles off his "seat" backwards, briskly bumping his head on the floor. The "seat," as the four-legged plank is appropriately termed, follows his example, and turns "legs upwards," three of the four supporters falling out. With some difficulty, things are "put to rights," and the boy who is writing engages their attention.]

Thomas. "Now, neighbor Jones, on account of the height of the writing desk, (a name given to a deal board placed against the wall and inclined toward it at an angle of 45°, with not a few marks of the aforesaid pen and jack-knife, to diversify its smoothness,) that boy's elbows are as high as his shoulders—his eyes are just above the edge of the desk, and his chin below it.—His book is so placed, that he writes across the desk, perpendicular to its edge. Every movement that is made by another scholar on the same seat, gives him a shove, for though the bench has four legs, it uses but three at a time, occasionally changing from one to another. The seat is a long one, having no prop in the centre, so that when a scholar near the centre rises, as he frequently must, to reach his books, the seat eases up, and gives the scholar employed in writing another friendly shove. What an uncomfortable and tiresome situation is this! Can a scholar improve in writing when thus placed?"

Jones. "That he can't. I see, I see it's all wrong, as bad as it can be. But what shall we do?"

Thomas. "Wait a moment, neighbor: look at the A B C scholar that we left sitting near the stove. See how red his face is. How the sweat rolls down in large drops. How comfortable his situation! Do not your children's coughs and colds originate from going into the chill air when thus covered with sweat?"

Jones. "That's true. Shameful! But how can we help it?"

Thomas. "Mr. Jones, you are a trustee. Now, do you and the other trustees get together, and call a meeting of the inhabitants of the district, giving to all notice of the meeting and its objects." [This is done, much to the surprise of the good people, who are unaware that every thing is not as it should be at the school-house. They have never visited, examined, and thought for themselves. The evening of the school meeting arrives. As the matter concerns their pockets, there is a full attendance, a thing that has scarcely happened, but on a like occasion, for half a century. Some conversation ensues.]

1st neighbor. "Well, neighbors, what be we here for? What new fangled notion has got in the wind now?"

2d neighbor. "O, I believe that Mr. Thomas, that lives in the fine house upon the hill, and has made a fortun' in 'York, wants us to tear the old school-house upside down, and fix it more to his notion."

3d neighbor. "Humph. I think Mr. Thomas might as well mind his own business. If the seats and desks suit us, that's enough. He needn't think we are going to pay away our money, just because he's got a maggot in his head."

The neighbors generally. "No, no, not we; guess we'll show him that. If our old school-house does not suit him, let him send his children to some boarding school."—[Enter Mr. Thomas. A dead silence.]

Mr. Thomas. "Good evening, neighbors. Glad to see so many of you here. Well, I persuaded our trustees to call you together, that you might look at the inside of our school house. Now what do you think of it?"

1st neighbor. "Why, we don't see but it's all well enough. We've done with it, and made out to get along as it is, this ten or twelve years, and I don't see but it will answer very well yet awhile."

Thomas. "Well enough! no, no. Here let me show you."

[Here Mr. Thomas goes through with the same explanations that he before did with Mr. Jones. He tells them of the miserable arrangement of desks and benches, and of the necessarily comfortless, painful situation of the scholars. He shows them that children can neither study, write, or learn, with any facility, thus placed. The causes of the sickness, and headaches, and pale faces, through a want of proper ventilation, and of the crooked backs and weak lungs of their children, through the narrow,

backless seats, are plainly explained. Then, as the writing desks are placed against the house sides, and the seats between those desks and the centre of the room, he describes the manner in which large girls are obliged to take their seats; pushing first to the right and then to the left, raising their feet to a level with the top of the seat, and then swinging round in the most awkward, immodest way possible. He then exhibits a model for a desk and a seat which he has procured; he shows how they should be placed, and invites those present to sit down and try his new seat and desk.]

Mr. Thomas. "Is not that seat perfectly easy? Is it not more comfortable than the old ones? Would it not be a great improvement to take out the old desks and benches, and put such as this in their places?"

Mr. Jones. "For my part, I think it would, and I have thought so all along.—What do you think, neighbors?"

1st neighbor. "Well, I don't know but the old benches might be made some better."

2d neighbor. "Yes, I think they might be made a good deal better."

3d neighbor. "I do think the seats and desks are not quite as convenient as they might be, but how shall we get new ones? Lumber is high. It will cost a great deal, besides the wages of the carpenter."

Mr. Thomas. "Raise a tax, neighbors, and go at it with a will. I will pay one-quarter of the expense myself, if you will tax yourselves for the remainder."

Mr. Jones. "So say I. Let's have new desks and benches. We'll not punish our children any longer with the old ones."

4th neighbor. "Yes, yes; the old benches shall not be left so another week. Mr. Thomas makes a fair offer and we'll take him up."

Another neighbor. "Yes, we'll raise a tax for three-quarters of the expense. If it does cost something, there are enough of us to pay it. It will be but little for each of us and will be much the cheapest in the end."

All the neighbors. "The tax shall be raised at once." [This is done and the school-house is made comfortable.] H.

EACH MAN HIS OWN WAY.

Where are the two men who agree on any one subject; and especially where shall we find two individuals thinking alike on the subject of education? That schools may be improved, each one wishes to try some new plan, or some old one a little modified.

Mr. Williams who is a wealthy farmer, but a man of a limited education and little

reading, thinks that books were made only for students and lazy people. He says, when you ask him to increase his children's education, "I have got along very well, and am as well off as my neighbors, and if my children have as good a chance as I had, they'll do very well." Mr. W. thinks the school good enough as it is. He wants no change. But if he could see that knowledge is much more necessary now than it was 20 years ago, he would be willing to give his children a better education than he received. This is so, whether the uneducated man sees it or does not see it. The intelligent man has the advantage of the ignorant one, for knowledge is power. The people are advancing in education, and if the parent wishes his children to *keep up with the times, to be on an equal footing with those to be met with in after life*, he must make the school *now* much better than it was 20 or even 10 years since. Mr. W. wrongs his children, and most cruelly too, by thinking his information is all that they will require when grown into manhood, and made to struggle for their very bread with those who have had superior advantages. This parent should pay more attention to his children's education. They will bless him in after life for the happiness and the aid of every new idea.

Mr. James says, "I know the schools are useless, but what can I do? If all the district would turn in and help I would be glad to do something; but I can do nothing alone." Almost every district has two or three Mr. James's living in it. They are convinced that something should be done, but are waiting for the others to feel as they do. This waiting is wrong. Mr. James should talk to his neighbors about the improvement of the school, call the people together, and show them what might be done, introduce what improvements he can individually, &c. &c. In this way he will greatly hasten the time when the whole district will be willing to work with him. Someone must start first. Being convinced of his duty, it is wrong to delay.

Mr. Bartlet replies, when asked to do something, "Oh, the state must improve the common schools. It has a large fund, and money enough, and nothing can be done till a greater sum is yearly given to each school." Mr. B. supposes that good schools are secured simply by paying more money to them. He does not see that the parent's unceasing sympathy, and aid, and watchfulness are demanded by the teacher and the children.

Mr. Shawls says, "The school law is de-

ficient. It does not work well. Our schools will never be improved till some change is made by the legislature in the school system." And so he folds his hands and does nothing. How short-sighted! The best school system would not work well unless it had the hearty co-operation of the people. The law itself is but a dead letter. The activity of the people gives it spirit. The fact is, the law, in the main is good—it only wants the people to do their duty. But if the law is inefficient, so much the more necessary is it that individuals act. This fault finding is not as good as fault mending.—And every one can do a little, if so disposed.

To find fault with our neighbors, or with the school system, or defer action till *all* shall act with us, will never improve the school. How discouraging are these excuses, and this dissatisfaction to the one who is laboring for improvement?

Again, we frequently find districts which have been contending or quarrelling for years. No improvements can be made, for the inhabitants have time only to fight each other. We do most earnestly and respectfully ask such districts to bury their feuds. What can you gain by such unyielding, stubborn conduct? Forgive and forget, and let there be a strong, united good feeling in this holy cause.

ASTRONOMY.

The work here spoken of is written by Francis Fellows, A. M. and published by Huntington & Co. of New-York. It has a map and twenty-seven engravings. The size is about the same with Hall's "Child's Geography," or Parley's "Sun, Moon and Stars." It is an interesting and useful book for children.

To J. ORVILLE TAYLOR:

Dear Sir—I send you herewith a little book entitled "Astronomy for Beginners," which I think is a valuable addition to the number of children's books already published. It is simple in its style and illustrations, and well calculated to interest the young mind in a science which above all others tends to expand the human intellect. If the attention of children could early be turned to intellectual pursuits we might expect to see a greater number in after life finding their pleasure in such pursuits instead of seeking it in the haunts of revelry and vice. We might expect to see books of science in some degree taking the place of works of fiction, and the rational powers improved rather than the fancy crazed and the passions inflamed. It is my opinion that the "Astronomy for Beginners" is such a

work as might be introduced into common schools with advantage.

T.

IMPUDEENCE.

Our extremely *polite* and *obliging friend*, the post-master at Toledo, Ohio, says:—"Fold your papers, or we shall send them back." Send back papers sent to his office for regular subscribers! Indeed, this *would* be taking the "responsibility" with a *vengeance*. We are not aware that our paper needs any folding after it has been put into the quarto form. It is the duty of the post-master to deliver the papers to those who call for them, and to whom they are directed, just as they arrive at his office. This kind friend of ours had better attend to his duty, and send us no more of his directions, or he may hear from the Post-Master-General in a manner rather derogatory to his temporary, wind-puffed importance. We could not send papers folded in a different manner if we would, unless a separate wrapper was put upon each. This, the quantity we distribute and the price we receive for them, will not allow us to do.

EDUCATION OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

Too many parents forget that the great business of education is carried on, by the trifling incidents of hourly occurrence.—They lay it down as a general principle, that they are to keep their promises to children, and yet in a multitude of cases, allow themselves to be teased into what was at first absolutely denied. I heard a little girl of about four years old teasing her mother for "drink." Water had been repeatedly given her during the morning, and was now refused—the request was urged again and again, and at last was followed by a subdued moaning and fretting—"You shall have some water when Isabella comes in," said the mother. The servant came, the water was given, and the little girl triumphantly turned to me saying, "I got it after all."—Now what child of common capacity would fail to draw the inference, "if I have plagued mother till she gave what I wanted just now, I can get what I want some other time."—The same plan is pursued on the next occasion, the child is again victorious, and the mother instead of conquering is conquered; each victory adds new strength to the conqueror, the war is waged more and more unequally, and the mother soon finds it easiest to yield at once.

If such a course is pursued, the child of necessity loses its confidence in a parent's word, and is it to be wondered at, that this should be the case, if the thing once forbidden, is at length, after repeated importunity, yielded, or what has once been promised, is withheld. Parents cannot be too careful about making promises, and when they afterwards have cause to regret a promise that has been made, they can easily explain to a child that the thing is given *only* because it has been promised. Or if a case should occur, as it sometimes may, in which it appears

wrong and injurious to the child to fulfil the agreement, the matter should be so explained, that the child willingly releases the parent from the contract, and this will be done without much difficulty, if feelings of confidence and obedience have been properly instilled.

Entire agreement of purpose between parents is absolutely necessary to the success of education. A child must never be allowed to feel, "if mother won't give it to me, father will," or the reverse. It must be known by experience that there is no appeal from one parent to the other. If it is otherwise, father and mother are converted at once into opposing factions, and the authority of both inevitably destroyed. A little boy troubled with a sore throat, was refused cold water by his mother. The father soon after entered the room and rang the bell for a tumbler of water. As soon as it was brought, the boy renewed his entreaties. "No my child," said the mother, "I told you it would make you sick." "But I want it," sobs the child. "What's the use of all this fuss about water," says the father, "let the child have it." "Indeed, I am afraid," replied the mother, "his throat is much sorcer since the morning." "Pooh, nonsense, it is not a case of life and death; here, my child, drink a little." Now the father, irritated by the cries of the child, acts without reflection. He is indeed actuated, though he little suspects it, by selfishness, and gives the water as much for his own relief as the child's.

Now this very individual, when asked the plain question, "Do you think it justifiable for one parent to act in opposition to the other?" answers unhesitatingly, "most certainly not, and I make it a rule never to interfere with my wife's commandment to the children on any occasion." He meant any great occasion. Little things he thought not worth his attention, but he forgot that we are educated by trifles, and our character and destinies often hinge on things apparently of no importance. The next request, the mother refused her little girl, the remark was, "I shall ask my father, when he comes home." How would that father have been shocked to hear the threatening tone in which this was uttered, and to feel that he who should have strengthened, had in fact weakened the mother's authority.—*Rel. Magazine.*

From the New-York Express.

THE FREE SCHOOLS.

The annual meeting of the Boston Free Schools, was held in Boston on Wednesday last. As usual upon this glorious festival, a public dinner was given to scholars, teachers and guests, by the city authorities. Several rich and beautiful medals were presented to the best scholars, and the day was agreeably and intellectually spent in the enjoyment of what might truly be called "the feast of reason and flow of soul." Speeches were made, toasts were drank, songs were sung, agreeable stories were told, and children in years, as well as "men, who are but children of a larger growth," seemed equally to enjoy the happy festival. We subjoin a few of the toasts:

"The Boys and Girls of our Schools—The true standing army of the Republic."

"The President of Harvard University—The impress of his genius and his industry are upon every path in which he has walked. Wherever he moves he leaves his marks and numbers."

"Modest Invention—It has relieved education of much of its lumber, and lessened the demand for *birch*."

"Prisons and Common Schools—Rival institutions; necessity for the one will be in the reverse ratio of the patronage of the other."

"The School-house of our early days—

"'Where'er we roam, whatever lands we see,
Our hearts untravelled fondly turn to turn.'"

"Good School Books—The only paper currency that is worth more than specie."

"The Medical Department of our Schools—May the internal application of the patients prevent the necessity of any external application by the doctors."

"Our Mothers—The teachers in that great primary school, the nursery—before we forget their instructions, may our right hand forget its cunning."

The free schools of New-England are the best in the world, and the free schools of Boston the best in New-England; and if it were possible to establish similar schools in all parts of our country, (and why is it not possible?) our country would present an almost omnipotent opposition to crime, idleness and ignorance. Our free schools are our temples of honor, virtue and religion—our security in peace, and our protection in danger. They are our nurseries of truth, of wisdom and of justice; and the intelligence we receive from them is, in the language of Governor Everett, "the elemental fire, which must lighten, warm and cheer us, as men and citizens. Talk of public buildings! Let the plain brick school-house go down, and though we pile our hill-tops with structures that surpass the time-defying solidity of Egyptian Thebes, or immortal gracefulness of Corinth or Athens, they will but stand the gorgeous monuments of our shame. Quench the beams of education, and though we should light up our streets like Milton's Pandemonium—

With many a vow
Of starry lamps and blazing cressets, fed
With naphtha and aphaltus, yielding light,
As from a sky,

till midnight outshone the noon-tide sun, our children's feet would still stumble on the dark mountains of ignorance as black as death.

From the Utica Observer.

EDCATION.

One reason why education heretofore has conferred such small practical benefits, compared with what it might have done, is this: the *school books* in common use have not given instruction in the every day business of manhood. A child in school should be taught the duties of county, town, and state officers, to fit him to discharge the duties of a good citizen. If designed for a farmer, he should study the nature of soils, grains, grasses, live stock, &c; also domestic economy, with some of the first principles of political economy. If designed for a mechanic, he should

learn something of metals, minerals, and timbers; also mechanics in their general principles. Such an education qualifies the head to help the hands, and the mind to confer enjoyment upon daily toil. Children in common schools should read books which treat on these important and useful subjects, and not be tied down to tasks which they do not comprehend, and of which they can make no practical use in after life. A series of school books is now issued of this practical character at the "Common School Depository," in Albany, which, if generally introduced, will materially serve the cause of education. They may be procured of Bennett & Bright in this city.

Mr. Luther Pratt, of México, in this country, has published a book entitled "An Exposition of the Constitution of the United States, for the use of Schools."

We perceive that the work is favorably noticed by many of our contemporaries, and we presume, from a cursory examination, that it might profitably be introduced into common schools.—*Pulaski Advocate.*

From the Newark Daily Advertiser.

YOUR CHILDREN.

Sit down among your little children, and let me say a word to you about family government. We good people of America, in our race for self-government, are in danger of not governing ourselves. Our lads grow up insubordinate; finding out, to our and their cost, that "it is a free country." An English traveller could find no boys in the United States; all being either children or men. The evil is undeniably on the increase. Parents are abandoning the reins; and when once this shall have become universal, all sorts of government but despotism will be impracticable.

Take that forward child in hand at once, or you will soon have to be his suppliant, rather than his guide. The old way was perhaps too rugged, where every thing was accomplished by mere dint of authority; but the new way is as bad on the other side; no man is reduced to the necessity of choosing an extreme.

We often visit houses where the parents seem to be mere advisory attendants, with a painful sinecure. Let such hear the words of a wise congressman of New-Jersey, and signer of the Declaration. "There is not a more disgusting sight than the impotent rage of a parent who has no authority. Among the lower ranks of people, who are under no restraints from decency, you may sometimes see a father or mother running out into the street after a child who is fled from them, with looks of fury and words of execration; and they are often stupid enough to imagine that neighbors or passengers will approve them in their conduct, though in fact it fills every beholder with horror." I am afraid none of us need go many rods from home to witness the like. What is commonly administered as reproof is often worse than nothing. Scolding rebukes are like scalding potions; they injure the patient. And angry chastisement is little better than oil on the fire. Not long since I was passing by the rail-road from Newark to New-

York. The train of cars pursued its furious way immediately by the door of a low 'shanty,' from which a small child innocently issued, and crossed the track before us just in time to escape being crushed by the locomotive. We all looked out with shuddering, when lo! the sturdy mother, more full of anger than alarm, strode forth, and seizing the poor infant, which had strayed only in consequence of her own negligence, give it a summary and violent correction. Inference: parents often deserve the strokes they give.

Implicit obedience—and that without question, expostulation or delay—is the keystone of the family arch. This is perfectly consistent with the utmost affection, and should be enforced from the beginning, and absolutely. The philosopher whom I cited above says of parental authority: "I would have it early that it may be absolute, and absolute that it may not be severe. It holds universally in families and schools, and even the greater bodies of men, the army and navy, that those who keep the strictest discipline give the fewest strokes." Some parents seem to image that their failures in this kind arise from the want of a certain mysterious *knack*, of which they conceive themselves to be destitute. There is such a *knack*; but it is as much within reach as the *knack* of driving a horse and chaise, or handling a knife and fork, and will never be got by yawning over it.

Not only love your children, but show that you love them; not by merely fondling and kissing them, but by being always open to their approaches. Here is a man who drives his children out of his shop, because they pester him; here is another who is always too busy to give them a good word. Now I would gladly learn of these penny-wise and pound-foolish fathers, what work they expect ever to turn out which shall equal in importance the children who are now taking their mould for life. Hapless is that child which is forced to seek for companions more accessible and winning than its father or its mother.

You may observe that when a working-man spends his leisure hours *abroad*, it is at the expense of his family. While he is at the club or the tavern, his boy or girl is seeking out-door connexions. The great school of juvenile vice is the *STREET*. Here the urchin, while he 'knuckles down at taw,' learns the vulgar oath, or the putrid obscenity. For one lesson at the fire-side, he has a dozen in the kennel. Here are scattered the seeds of falsehood, gambling, theft, and violence. I pray you, as you love your own flesh and blood, make your children cling to the hearth stone. Love home yourself; sink your roots deeply among your domestic treasures; set an example in this, as in all things, which your offspring may follow. The garden plant seems to have accomplished its great work, and is content to wither, when it has matured the fruit for the next race: learn a lesson from the plant.

Mr. Wirt has the following remarks addressed to a young lady:

"If you have time for it, read authentic history which will show you the world as it really is; do not read rapidly and superfi-

cially, with a view merely to feast on the novelty and variety of events, but deliberately and studiously, with the pen in your hand and your note books by your side, extracting as you go along, not only every prominent event, but every elegant and judicious reflection of the author, so as to form a little book of practical wisdom for yourself."

In a prospectus of the "Youth's Guide and Casket," published monthly at Poughkeepsie, for \$1.25 per annum in advance, we find the following notice. Where can be found a similar example?

"All the proceeds of this paper, during the present year, above paying its reasonable expenses, will be expended in educating poor children and in relieving the distressed."

From our personal knowledge of the senior editor, we know this will be most scrupulously done.

LIBRARIES AND SCHOOL BOOKS.

Any district may be furnished with a library by sending us \$20. We have selected a good class of books for this library. Also, by the wholesale all the best school books now in use, may be had at this office. Booksellers can be supplied on the lowest terms.

The school books published at this Depository are also published by the following firms:

American Stationers' Company, Boston.
Mack, Andrus & Woodruff, Ithaca, N. Y.
J. & J. N. Bogert, Geneva, N. Y.
Dorr & Howland, Worcester, Mass.
Ivison & Terry, Auburn, N. Y.
Wm. Alling, Rochester.

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC.

We learn that a Mr. Porter has been acting as our agent without our knowledge or consent. He is dishonest, and has never made a remittance. Beware of him. He was once at the Oneida Institute, Whitesboro'. No person is a constituted agent, unless he can exhibit a certificate signed by the editor or his clerk. Mr. Lucius Patterson, of West Monroe, Oswego county, is no longer our agent. We shall be obliged to notice certain others, unless we hear from them soon.

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"Alpha" in our next. The favors of several others will be inserted in due season. We will readily give place to the statement of our friend at Montgomery, if it is short and free from personalities. "X." came too late for the present number. We may insert it in our next.

NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS.

Current bank notes will be received for our paper as heretofore. "Shin-plasters" have been sent from Tennessee, Maryland, Pennsylvania, &c. They are entirely useless to us. Where it is necessary to send small sums, they may be enclosed to us in fifty-cent pieces, free of postage, by a postmaster. These are preferable to bank notes from the extreme south and west. Although we take these notes, we cannot, in many instances, dispose of them at any discount whatever.

NOTICE.

Schools and academies, wishing to employ well qualified instructors, and competent individuals disposed to teach, may apply to us, *post paid*. We will do what we can to provide schools with good teachers, and teachers with good schools.

When districts apply for teachers they should specify—

- 1st. The sex and qualification required.
- 2d. The amount of duty to be performed.
- 3d. The salary to be given.
- 4th. The time when the teacher is wanted to commence, and the time for which it is wished to employ said teacher.
- 5th. Whether the travelling expenses of the teacher will be paid.

Teachers applying for situations should specify—

- 1st. Place of education and present residence.
- 2d. Age.
- 3d. Whether married or single.
- 4th. Whether the applicant has ever taught.
- 5th. Branches capable of teaching.
- 6th. Amount of salary expected.
- 7th. What situation is desired, whether as Principal, or Assistant, or private Teacher.
- 8th. The location preferred.
- 9th. Miscellaneous remarks.

Recommendations of moral character must always accompany the application.

AGENTS.

Many of the first minds in our country have been enlisted to write a set of school books for our children and youth. They will be found (to accommodate many of our friends who have requested them) on sale by the following persons:—

Anth. F. M'Cabe, Shanaeateles, Onondaga co.
Wm. B. Holmes, Herkimer, Herkimer co.
George Gifford, New-Paltz, Ulster co.
E. Gates, Troy, Rensselaer co.
Robinson, Pratt & Co. New-York.
E. D. Richardson & Co. Cooperstown, Otsego.
Bennet & Bright, Utica, Oneida.
Elias Palmer, Ballston Spa, Saratoga.
S. Whalen, Milton, Saratoga.
C. Roscoe, Sing-Sing, Westchester.
S. Wescott, P. M. Hudson, Columbia.
Potter & Wilson, Poughkeepsie, Dutchess.
James H. Vale, Geneseo, Livingston.
A. A. Lane, Bridgeport, Connecticut.
Elsha Taylor, Annapolis, Maryland.
E. Webb, Anderson C. H. South Carolina.
D. Galusha, Lodi, Cattaraugus.
Mack, Andrus & Woodruff, Ithaca, Tompkins co.
Ivison & Terry, Auburn, Cayuga co.
Bogart & Wynkoop, Geneva, Ontario co.
Wm. Alling & Co. Rochester, Monroe co.

AGENTS WANTED.

Agents are wanted to procure subscribers in this and other states. A liberal commission will be allowed. The best references, as to character and responsibility, will, in every case, be required.

The CULTIVATOR, a monthly publication of 16 quarto pages each, conducted by J. BUEL, and devoted exclusively to agriculture and the improvement of young men, is forwarded to subscribers from the office, (No. 3 Washington-street,) at fifty cents per annum, payable in advance.

Steam-Press of Packard & Van Benthuysen.